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9 July 1968

THE SOVIET NORTHERN FLEET

The Northern Fleet, its units and operations, is of prime intelligence interest. This fleet is the source of ballistic missile submarines which pose an increasingly significant portion of the Soviet strategic threat to NATO, including the continental United States.

Northern Fleet long range attack and cruise missile submarines provide the Soviets with a considerable capability against Free World merchant shipping and naval surface units in the Norwegian Sea, Atlantic and Mediterranean. The Northern Fleet provides most of the 6-10 submarines regularly on patrol in the Mediterranean.

New Soviet submarine and surface units are delivered early if not first to the Northern Fleet. At least one unit each of a new type of nuclear ballistic missile submarine and a nuclear attack submarine are now operating from Northern Fleet bases.

~~TOP SECRET~~

~~TOP SECRET~~

SOVIET SUBMARINE FORCE

About 150 operational submarines are assigned to the Northern Fleet. Included in this total are 27 ballistic missile (Y, H, G, and Z class) submarines, 27 cruise missile (E, J, and W class) submarines and 14 nuclear-powered attack (N, C, and V class) units. The N-class units are based at Litsa Bay as are the nuclear-powered E-class cruise missile submarines. Some H-class and G-class submarines are based at Sayda Bay although the bulk of the older ballistic missile submarines are assigned to Olenya Bay. Medium range submarines are concentrated at Ura Bay while the F-class and Z-class long range attack submarines are based at Polyarnyy.

SUBMARINE BUILDING PROGRAMS

At least three new submarine programs are now under way. Polaris-type submarines carrying 16 missiles are being built at the Severodvinsk shipyard in the White Sea. From 4 to 6 of these new submarines--designated the Y-class--had been launched as of mid-June. One of these units moved to Sayda Bay late last year [REDACTED]

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probably will soon leave the shipyard. The rate of production may reach as many as six a year by 1970 and as many as 38 of the new units could be operational by mid-1975. We expect the first unit to go out on patrol in the Atlantic this summer.

Two new classes of nuclear-powered attack submarines also are being built in the USSR. One of these submarines--designated the C-class--is built at the Gorkiy shipyard. The lead unit of this class was moved to Severodvinsk for the final outfitting last summer and then sent to the operational base in Litsa Bay.

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There is some evidence to indicate that this submarine carries a new type weapons system, possibly a rocket assisted torpedo such as the Subroc system.

A new V-class submarine is being built at the Admiralty shipyard in Leningrad. These units appear to be an improved version of the older N-class units and may not be as advanced as the C-class. Leningrad has a limited production capacity, and this building program may be intended to produce only a limited number of submarines.

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~~TOP SECRET~~

SOVIET SURFACE COMBATANTS

Three of the new Kresta-class guided missile cruisers have been completed. One is assigned to the Northern Fleet, and the other two are operating in the Baltic. Two conventional cruisers are with the Northern Fleet and four others are in the Baltic.

The newer missile-equipped ships increasingly are being used for the more distant deployments. Of the guided missile destroyers, two of the Kashin-class and one converted Kotlin are in the Northern Fleet. The Baltic Fleet has two Kashins, plus four Krupnyy-class and one Kildin-class, equipped with surface-to-surface missiles. Eighteen gun-armed destroyers and fifty-five escorts are assigned to the Northern and Baltic Fleets.

SURFACE SHIP BUILDING PROGRAMS

All of the major warships built since 1960 have been equipped with missiles. The largest units now under construction are the two Moskva-class helicopter carriers in the Black Sea. The first unit of this class is complete and operating in

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the Crimean area. The second unit is near completion. The Moskva will probably be used primarily as the nucleus of an anti-submarine warfare group, but might also be used for such tasks as small-scale, unopposed amphibious operations and air defense for other units. These ships carry a new surface-to-air missile and improved radars.

The Kresta-class cruisers armed with both surface-to-surface and surface-to-air missiles are being built in Leningrad. In addition to the three units already completed at least eight others are under construction. The Soviets consider these ships large ASW ships, and they are equipped with a hangar for helicopters.

The only other surface combatants currently under construction are the small Petya-class escorts. Some older Kotlin-class and Krupnyy-class destroyers, however, are being converted to fire surface-to-air missiles.

The Soviets are slowly strengthening their amphibious forces. Alligator-class landing ships capable of transporting a naval infantry battalion are being built in the Baltic. At least four of

~~TOP SECRET~~

~~TOP SECRET~~

these units have entered operational service since 1967. Since last summer at least one of these ships has been used for Mediterranean service. Another Alligator is frequently assigned to the Northern Fleet. The smaller Polnocny-class units continue to be built in Poland.

NORTHERN FLEET BASES

Following is a description of Northern Fleet naval bases and the order of battle at those bases:

Severomorsk

This is the Headquarters of the Red Banner Northern Fleet and the home port of the missile armed major surface ships. It is also a storage facility for both cruise and ballistic missiles. Munitions, POL, torpedoes, and general stores are available in this port. There are some 25 surface ships and a dozen submarines tied up here on a regular basis. Units present usually include a couple ballistic missile submarines, a handful of diesel units, a Lama-class missile support ship, and a number of yard and service craft. The nuclear icebreaker Lenin normally based here is now undergoing repairs at Severodvinsk.

~~TOP SECRET~~

~~TOP SECRET~~

Sayda Bay

This is one of the major submarine bases in the Kola Inlet. It is used principally by H-class and G-class ballistic missile submarines and will probably become the major base for the new Y-class units. There are usually present some of the older destroyers, as well. The mothballed reserve fleet is also located at this base, which provides ballistic missiles, torpedoes, munitions, and general stores to the units which call here.

Pala Bay

This is primarily a submarine repair yard. There are usually present 3-5 ballistic missile submarines, several E-II-class cruise missile submarines, and half a dozen attack submarines, including N-class nuclear units. This is also the port used by most of the amphibious units in the Northern Fleet. Units present include one Alligator, 5-6 Polnocny, and 3-4 of the smaller landing ships. A couple escort types are also usually in port.

Litsa Bay

This submarine base is located west of the Kola Inlet. It is used principally by nuclear units, including E-II-class cruise missile units, N-class attack submarines, and will probably be the base used by the new C-class and V-class

~~TOP SECRET~~

attack units. An Ugra-class submarine tender is usually present to supplement the shore facilities. The J-class cruise missile units usually operate from Litsa Bay.

Olenya Bay

There are usually a half dozen submarines, including G-class ballistic missile units, at this submarine base in the Kola area. There are no extensive shore facilities, but the base provides for a dispersal of first-line submarines and alleviates congestion at the major bases.

Polyarnyy Naval Complex

The large Polyarnyy naval complex is located near the entrance to the Kola Inlet. It has a major submarine training center, as well as facilities to store munitions, POL, torpedoes, general stores, and missiles. Some twenty long range attack submarines are usually tied up at these piers. In addition, there are about twenty escorts and mine warfare ships in the harbor. Numerous service and yard craft, including a small tender, serve the port.

~~TOP SECRET~~

Pechenga Bay

This is the most western of the Northern Fleet naval bases. It is used primarily by W-class submarines and an assortment of patrol craft and mine warfare ships. One small submarine tender supplements the shore facilities. General stores, torpedoes, and POL are available in limited quantities.

Murmansk

There is a naval base and repair facility at Rosta. There are ample pier space, crane capacity, and storage facilities here to support over twenty ships. However, the base appears to be used primarily for the repair of submarines and small surface ships. The shipyard at Rosta is the largest in the Kola Gulf, but most major repairs are done at Severodvinsk in the White Sea. A few minor surface combatants are usually stationed at Murmansk.

Severodvinsk

The site of the world's largest submarine construction yard, Severodvinsk has the only nuclear support facility in the Northern Fleet.

It also has facilities for general stores, training POL, and repairs. The USSR's new 16-missile Y-class submarine is under construction there.

In addition to nuclear submarines being serviced at the nuclear support facility, there usually are

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a few diesel-powered attack units at Severodvinsk and one or two cruise missile submarines. About two destroyer escorts and a dozen minesweepers and survey ships are usually also present there.

Iokanga

Iokanga is a major submarine base with ship repair facilities. About ten torpedo attack submarines are usually present there, including one or two nuclear-powered units. Surface ships might include a guided missile frigate, three destroyer escorts, and a couple of small escort vessels.

Arkhangel

This is a minor port facility near the Severodvinsk shipyard. Limited general stores, POL, and munitions are available. The port is used primarily by small patrol craft. There is also a naval training center at Arkhangel.

Ura Bay

There is a medium-sized submarine base in Ura Bay west of the Kola Inlet. The port is used by some twenty attack submarines and a few research ships. A submarine tender is frequently present. There are two small naval bases used primarily by coastal defense forces near the Ura Bay submarine base. The Ara Bay base and Port Vladimir base have limited support facilities. A small

~~TOP SECRET~~

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base, Teriberka, is located 40 miles east of the Kola Inlet. There are limited storage facilities for munitions and general stores.

Nenoksa

A naval missile test center is located west of the Severodvinsk shipyard. This facility is used to test cruise missiles and probably is also being used to flight test the missile for the Y-class submarine.

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